

KUDOS and CONGRATS

Major Jerome Core, for his retirement on 22 July.

To Sgt Christopher Tirado, for his selection as the Commandant's Photographer reporting this month.



Notes From The Occfld Specialist: CWO2 G.E. Lollar

To Major Core and his family, all of us here at VIM wish you the best as you transition out of the Corps and assume new responsibilities at the Defense Visual Information Center in SoCal. Good luck and God Speed.

GT Scores. Marine Corps Order P1200, commonly known as the MOS Manual, defines the requirements for all OccFld 46 personnel. If you look at our four MOSs, every one of them requires that Marines possess a minimum GT of 100. The manual was changed in 1999 to standardize the MOS GT requirements for all four MOS's. If you had access to personnel databases you would find that the OccFld (regardless of rank) still has a large number of Marines with GT scores below 100. It is important that individual Marines work to improve their scores to meet the minimum requirement. It is just as, if not more, important that our leadership drive this from the OIC/SNCOIC level. The GT becomes increasingly important when the Marine desires to compete for enlisted commissioning or warrant officer programs or is forced to lat-move due to lack of 46XX boat spaces. For Sgt's and above, your GT score is also present on your Master Brief Sheet. As we should have (2) openings for Warrant Officer in the next FY, it is extremely important that those desiring appointment review their GT and EL scores.

Advanced VI Programs-Syracuse University—I would like to take this opportunity to encourage those of you desiring attendance at Syracuse to begin preparing your portfolios. The call up message should be released in January in order to post PCS orders within the 90-day time frame.

*The VIM webpage has gone through several changes. Please take some time to peruse the site! The proposed final **Strategic Plan** has been posted.

*Please take the time to read the articles submitted in this issue. We truly had some great contributions.



Marine Corps Systems Command
CWO4 Wayne Golwitzer, Visual Information
Systems (PMM-161/VIS) and
Staff Sergeant J. A. Frank
Project Officer Handheld Systems, MCSC

As we enter into the final quarter of fiscal year 2004, I wanted to share with all of you some of the challenges and triumphs of this year we've had a MARCORSYSCOM.

As of July 2004 we have nearly completed the fielding of the first forty-nine Combat Still Acquisition Systems (TAMCN A71007G) with the last unit to receive the systems being 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. We will build out the remaining sixteen systems in FY 2005 and fielded to the remaining Combat Camera and Reproduction units as T/O 05/10 becomes a reality.

The first thirty-six Combat Video Acquisition Systems (TAMCN A71057G) are nearing completion at the integrator and will ship to units in the next 45 days once they have completed inspection at MCLB Albany. The remaining twenty-nine systems will be procured and fielded in FY 2005.

The maintenance and support contract for all our camera systems was signed 1 July, and will be up and running by 31 July. SSgt Frank will be providing a detailed overview of this program in the next week or so. Running concurrently with this effort will be the publication of Users Logistic Support Summaries (ULSS) for both systems. For those of you not familiar with what a ULSS does is it provide you, the end user, with detailed information on how to report maintenance issues to MARCORSYSCOM, Logistics Command (LOGCOM), and how to get maintenance on components of the system. Very handy document!

We are moving forward on the procurement of four Tactical Imagery Production Systems, but have not put this system on contract. We are currently in discussions with Wenzlau Engineering, the apparent winner of the contract, in regard to components changes, costs and delivery schedules. We hope to have these ironed out in the next week.

The Tactical Imagery Production System has gone through several changes over the last year. Most of you have heard of the most significant change, which is the adoption of the MTVR as the prime mover for the system. There were many factors involved in this decision, but capabilities required ultimately dictated the use of the MTVR.

A second change to the TIPS is the deletion of the AN/PRC-117f radio from the system. Based on the complexity of the radio, training required, bandwidth restrictions and newer, lighter, increased bandwidth configurations coming in the next year, we are going to pursue an INMARSAT solution for all communications in the TIPS.

Project Team Assignments:

As some of you may know SSgt Maynard has PCS'ed to CVIC, Quantico. His efforts over the past three years have been instrumental in making this Program happen. His dedication and diligence will be missed.

In November 2004 SSgt Frank will be heading to the 24th MEU, he currently handles Hand-Held and Individual Systems for VIS. His replacement will be Mr. Jeff Foster who will assume these duties. His knowledge and insight will carry this project to new heights. He can be reached at 703-432-3260 or DSN 378-3260.

CWO3 Cox will be checking in to MARCORSYSCOM in July 2004. He is going to assume the Training and Production Unit portion of VIS. This program has been overlooked and has been run adhoc for the past few years due to continuing operations in the war on terror. His addition to the team will help launch this project and institutionalize these systems. He will also be handling DINFOS support, VTC issues and any classroom support requested of SYSCOM.

Mr. Matt Carlstrom (Gator) continues to lean forward at MCLB Albany, PM TMDE South. His support and efforts, while not often visible to the fleet, are paying huge dividends for both Combat Camera and Public Affairs. Logistics questions can be forwarded to him via email, he's in the GAL, or he can be reached at DSN 567-6420.

Challenges:

Regardless of our best efforts many challenges remain for the VIS Team. Our first and foremost is resources. Our current budget and the implementation of T/O 05/10 have stained our ability to provide systems to every unit. We are prioritizing based upon current operations and deployment plans. We are also actively seeking out additional resources (money) from anywhere we can get it along with every other program. Reality is money is tight, and we are not having the success that we have in past years due to the ongoing war on terror. At present every available dollar is being poured into SAPI and up-armor for HMMWV's. We don't anticipate any windfall this fiscal year.

Since resources are limited, we have released a message requesting units drop any excess or no longer required still and video cameras and lens to MARCORSYSCOM PM TMDE South. This message will hit the street in the next few days once DMS is backup and running. This efforts goal is two fold.

1. Build a reserve of equipment that can be temp loaned to units requiring additional equipment due to operations.
2. Reduce costs of ongoing projects by using this equipment as trade ins for like equipment. Primarily these will be used to feed the spares pool of the maintenance contracts.

Please feel free to contact the VIS Team if you have questions.

HIGH SPEED LOW DRAG MAINTENANCE

SSgt J.A Frank

Maintenance for the Combat Still Acquisition System (TAMCN A7100 CSAS) and the Combat Video Acquisition System (TAMCN A7105 CVAS) going to Combat Camera Units just got easier. These camera systems provide operational force commanders with critical services and capabilities that are essential to the execution of operations in support of national defense. The CSAS and CVAS are now maintained by Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) vice the standard manufactures warranty. This means a single vendor will manage the overall logistics process of the system. In other words the vendor will provide warranty, on-site preventive maintenance, depot level maintenance, and repair services for the system.

What does this mean to the end user? It means you no longer have to keep track of multiple warranties and vendors to get your gear repaired. As of 1 July 2004 Integrity Data Inc. (IDI) will now be a single point of service for all cameras, lens, and other Store Account Code 2 items of the systems. IDI is a Colorado based company that dedicates almost all of its efforts to supporting government agencies.

Getting equipment repaired is now as easy as notifying IDI, and IDI will have a replacement on deck with in 48 hours. OK, there's a little more to the process, but it really is that easy. The end user has to log onto IDI's website and fill out a Return Materials Authorization form (RMA). This form is submitted to IDI electronically, and IDI will ship the replacement equipment. The end user must ship the broken equipment back to IDI for repair. The replacement equipment stays with the end user, and becomes part of the kit. The broken equipment is repaired by IDI, and goes back on the shelf as a spare to be issued out as a replacement for other systems. IDI keeps track of all the serial number changes, and what goes in each of the systems. If the end user can't get to the website, you can contact our contractor (Mr. Matthew Carlstrom) at Logistics Command in Albany GA. He facilitates the coordination with IDI, and he will fill the RMA form out for the user.

The website will also have Store Account Code 3 (SAC 3) items available for procurement. Store Account Code 3 items like batteries, filters, and compact flash cards are the responsibility of the end user to replace. These are items you will have to budget for. The end user can procure the SAC 3 items with an impact card through the website.

IDI will also conduct onsite clean and checks (preventive maintenance). Clean and checks will check cameras for serviceability, tighten housings, check imaging sensors and repair or replaces as necessary, upgrade firmware, and remove dust and dirt from the camera housings. These clean and checks will be conducted at a central location on the East coast, West coast, and overseas once a year.

As you can see the maintenance process is changing at a rapid pace. It behooves all of us to keep abreast of the changes. The official IDI website, and all POC's concerning the CLS for these systems will be published shortly in the ULSS on Albany's publication website. All other questions can be directed to the Project Officer, Handheld Systems, VIS, MCSC, Quantico VA DSN: 378-3261.

Semper Fi
SSgt James H. Frank
Project Officer Handheld Systems, MCSC

Visual Information Training

CWO4 Joseph Sanders, Visual Information Training Officer

Lithographer School:

The Navy & Marine Corps Lithographic instructors and MGySgt Mattocks met with one of my Course Developers on 15 June 2004 for the formal Training Task Selection Board (TTSB). This board identified tasks for the new Basic Lithographers Course at DINFOS. The new course ID will be DINFOS-BLC. The official transfer will be effective 1 October 2004. We are working very hard to make the transfer as smooth as possible for all concerned. Gunnery Sergeant Rivera has the Marine Corps lead at Fort Belvoir and is doing a fantastic job working the nuts and bolts. Gunnery Sergeant Bishop and I are working the Fort Meade side. We will keep you posted on the move as it develops.

Advanced Visual Information Programs: Motion Media & Photojournalism:

The solicitations were posted and Syracuse won the contract for the two programs. The first iteration will take place this fall for the 4641 and 4671 MOS's. VIM has details on the Marine Corps students. Many have asked about a similar program for the 4611 & 12 MOS's. This has to be brought to DINFOS by the Services as a training requirement. If you feel it is a real need, identify this to VIM so they have a true requirement.

Training & Readiness Manual (T&R):

As briefed at the Annual Conference, we are developing a T&R Manual to replace the ITS and provide Mission Essential Tasks (MET) for the entire community. We plan to conduct a T&R conference sometime in July or August. This will require OCCFLD representatives from all MOS's, specifically the Op For (per TECOM requirements). Ground Training Branch (GTB) will officially announce this to the MARFOR's for participation, but WO Lollar and I will unofficially let you know ahead of time. If you are interested, please let your OIC/SNCOIC know so they can pass it on to me.

Doctrine:

As briefed at the Annual Conference, I am the action officer for our Doctrinal publication (MCWP 3-33.7) rewrite in support of the October 2005 T/O Change per our reengineering plan. We held a Doctrine SME conference 12-16 January 2004. Representatives from the OpFor, SE, Training, and DOTMLPF team participated. The "Author's" draft was forwarded to Doctrine Division, MCCDC. It was edited and I am making changes in order to publish the "Coordinating" draft. This version is staffed to the Marine Corps for comments. Expect this in the next 60 days.

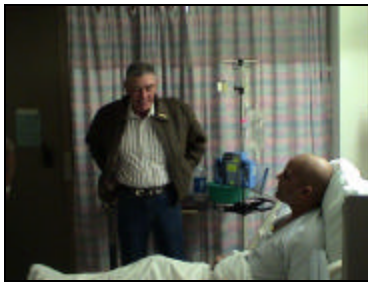
DINFOS Website: www.dinfos.osd.mil.

Marine Detachment Fort Meade: www.tecom.usmc.mil/dinfos.sandersj@dinfos.osd.mil

Ph: 301-677-3246 (dsn 622)

Fx: 301-677-4290

NEWS FROM THE FLEET



If you do not know already, my name is SSGT Carlos Pena. I have been in the Marine Corps for a little over 8 years. August 26, 2003 I was diagnosed with Cancer, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL) to be more exact. On that day at around 1445 my life came crashing down on me. Thinking of how my career, my family, friends, and my wife (only 4 days married at the time, would suffer and slip away from me forever was unbearable. At the same time those things that I thought I would lose, became my strength to move on. I focused on life and saw this as a challenge, myself and anyone close to me endured 8 long months of Chemotherapy, trips to the emergency room, and one chilling close encounter with death that put me in the Intensive Care Unit for 5 days. I drew all of my strength from my wisdom, and drive that I learned from my experiences in the Corps and in life. I am now in my 4th month of remission. Unfortunately having this health history I am no longer fit for duty, I am sorry to my career come to such an early end, but I am thankful for the life I have left ahead of me. I want to thank all of those who motivated me to move on and become a better Marine and ultimately a better person. I will be retiring in the San Diego, CA area, once a Marine always a Marine. So email me if you are around or just want to drop me a line. I will miss all of you and the Corps, for I have never seen an organization with such loyalty and support than our beloved Marine Corps. To all the Marines in Iraq, I thank you from the bottom of my heart and keep you in my prayers so that god keeps you in his graces.

Gunnery Sergeant Promotion Board Article

Submitted By: CWO2 T.E. LeMaster, 3D MarDiv Combat Camera

This year I was selected to be a voting member of the Gunnery Sergeant Selection board. I jumped at the chance. Here I was being given the opportunity to partake of the inner workings of one the most "mystical" processes in the Marine Corps. Little did I know what I was about to get into.

When the board did kick off, it consisted of a mix of 21 officers and Sergeants Majors and Master Gunnery Sergeants who were selected for the board. We received initial briefings about what was going to take place and what the process was going to be. During this the main item that was stressed was the Precept. This was basically the Commandant's guidance. It addressed several issues such as strength of B-billets, how collateral duties should be viewed as fulfilling the Corps needs, and many other issues.

The board can be broken down into 3 major steps. Preparing the briefs on each individual Marine, briefing each individual Marine then voting on each Marine. Twenty of the board members had approximately 130 records to prepare briefs on. The twenty-first member was the president of the board. He reviewed the below zone records making selections for the board to consider. Initially it took us a long time to prep, some people took hours to prep one brief. As time went along, and we learned what we were looking for and how to navigate the system, most of us were able to get the time down to approximately 30-45 minutes per nominee.

Prepping the briefs was a long process. Record books are looked at in order of MOS. Each briefer is randomly assigned a portion of any given MOS. The briefers are provided access to each individual's electronic OMPF and a folder that contains any updated information, hard copy photos, correspondence or any other miscellaneous papers. The folder also had a short information tab that contained current PFT scores, Rifle/pistol, and MOS. Everything we derived regarding the performance and character of a Marine is based on these files. The board has no access to the 3270 or other systems outside of your OMPF. One more item the board does have is an adverse roster. This roster listed every NJP or higher disciplinary action and weight control history/status. This information is pulled just before the board meets. The first step was to generally look for any black marks. Automatic disqualifiers such as weight control, NJP's in grade or in the last couple years or so etc. If no showstoppers were found the briefer would pore over all the documents in the OMPF.

If it came time that any briefers had questions or needed clarification regarding any aspect of a Marine we were able to submit an inquiry for the information. We would inquire regarding fitrep gaps, missing PFT scores, confirmation on weight or any other issue that caught our attention. These inquiries were sent out to individual commands and/or individual Marines for action or looked up in the "system".

When we actually prepped the briefs there was initial header information that was comprised of the following bullets: PME, rifle score, pistol score, PFT class and score, weight control status, photo submitted, adverse material, special duty, combat experience and personal decorations. One point to make clear is that time in grade and service play absolutely no role. It is as if everyone, regardless of seniority, is the same. At that point it was up to the briefer to determine what information they felt should be presented to the board. The briefer's job is not to "sell" a Marine. It is simply to give out the information regarding the Marine's performance and record. Obviously their perception of what is significant and what isn't plays a role in how they view and

present the Marine. When it comes time to brief there will be 20 other sets of eyes roaming over the OMPF who are mining for information and making their own determination, positive, negative or neutral. Some briefers would give a chronological rundown of what the Marine has done and identify trends in fitreps, perceived strengths and weaknesses. Some briefers would skim over the time as a Sergeant and go in depth into the performance as a SNCO. At times simply the relative or cumulative values were all that were identified. When everything has been looked at the briever assigns a point value they recommended for that particular. The point scale went from 2-6. The way we were briefed was as such: 2-not recommended; 3-recommended with reservation; 4-recommended for promotion; 5- recommended with enthusiasm; 6-water walker. Point value 1 is saved for officer boards.

To kind of put it into perspective, 2's generally had adverse material recently, failed a recent PFT, weight control, NJP or DUI or something similar. It quickly became a trend to not recommend someone if there were fitrep gaps over 30 days in their books. The 3's generally had a wide variety of issues. It could have been a recent history of weight control coupled with failed PFT's ; maybe low/adverse performances or a severe lack of MOS credibility. They generally had weaknesses of the nature that they could perform at the rank of gunny if needed, but significant enough to warrant hesitation. 4's were recommended with confidence. 4's were basically considered the bulk of the "pack". In general most did not have b-billets. They got good marks but when compared to the thousands of other candidates they were very similar. They are good solid Marines you would like to see promoted. 5's generally had good to outstanding performances, b-billets, combat experience or other significant achievements. The 6's were special. It may seem strange but when a briever got one of these candidates, they jumped out instantly. Normally they had excellent to outstanding b-billets, PME completed above their grade, 230+ PFT scores, strings of accomplishments, glowing fitreps, top rankings in military schools, accelerated promo recommendations from various RO/RS's and competed on meritorious boards. None of these are absolute but they were very common. Every board member had their own "criteria" they were looking for. As the board progressed we tended to add + and - values to these scores to help break up the groups when it came time to vote.

As we built up the inventory of prepared cases we began to break up our days by prepping in the morning and briefing the cases in the afternoon/evening. The briever would stand up and give the rundown of the header information. Initially the briefs were relatively long, but after we got used to what really mattered and learned more about reading OMPF's it got down to about 1-2 minutes. Some special circumstances at times made for longer briefs, explaining situations regarding adverse material tended to be the most common reason. As the briever is going through the information the rest of us were looking through the OMPF and photo.

Twenty sets of eyes were scrutinizing looking for strengths and weaknesses to set the candidate apart from the "pack" either positive or negative. As we got better, we could easily spot trends in the master brief sheet. Was the Marine marked by the RO with peers or above or below? How consistent were the marks, was there signs of growth over time? What kind of cumulative value did they get? How did it seem to change or not to change compared to other RO or RS's? Was any adverse material or significant accomplishments missed? One of the big items was whether the strength of the comments was backed by the RO/RS values. I believe most board members put more faith in the values than the comments overall. Often times they simply did not seem to go together. What carried weight was how did this RS/RO view this Marine in

relation to the past and present Marines they have observed? None of these factors were absolute though. Every Marine is given due consideration based on the whole picture. Did the Marine get any special billets or recognition such as Colors Sergeant or Company Gunny? Were there any special performances at Staff Academy? Does a low performing or adverse fitrep seem to be a "hiccup"?

Each board member has a roster of every candidate. This roster has the header sections we wrote in the information and kept notes/bullets as the briefer went on. This information would be used when it came time to decide who we were going to vote for. At the end of the briefer's turn we would assign our own value/ranking to the candidate. This would be used up later, in some cases nearly 2 months later, to reference and make our choices for voting.

The prepping and briefing took the bulk of our 2 months on the board. It was indeed a long grueling process. We had our faces buried in files and computer monitors for 2 months 6 days a week averaging 10+ hours a day cooped up inside while the world on the outside went on.

Finally after we finished the last briefs we came to voting time. The board moved fast. Each member needed to make certain they had their votes lined up based on their assigned values and notes taken by each member. We were presented with each MOS with the candidates in alphabetical order. We had our number of votes lined up. As each name came up on the screen we simply entered No or Yes. At the end of each MOS the recorders for the board would read off where the cut-off was. Lets say an MOS had ten candidates. Out of those ten you could vote for three. Twenty-one members could lay down 63 total votes spread over those ten. For someone to get selected they MUST have majority (11) votes. So a final vote could break down that 1 person gets 20 votes a second gets 16 the third gets 13 and a fourth gets 12. The cut off was at 16 votes for that round, the top three vote-getters have been selected.

If there was not a clean cut-off, such as if the third and fourth person each received 13 votes, we would go to another round with each member getting one vote.

This took us about 26 hours to get done. Broken up between two days. Approximately a day later the selection list was posted and we all went home.

Now then, there is a lot I want to share with everybody regarding how they can help themselves and their Marines. However, my bullets of these points are over 4 pages and still not completed. I will simply hit the big topics.

B-billets are major boosts. In general it seemed to go that if you were a solid Marine with a b-billet most board members seemed to rate these Marines as a 5. This is important because very few MOS's dipped into the 4 category for selection.

Check your OMPF and fitreps! In general the board saw it as the Marine isn't doing one of the most fundamental steps in taking care of their selves. Also there were many instances the missing reports turned out to be adverse or had derogatory material.

Get your photo in. If a Marine conducting counterintelligence behind enemy lines in Iraq can submit a snapshot in a beard, there is no reason a recruiter or I&I Marine can't get one from Wichita.

There is no real need to send a letter to the board unless it contains updated information or clarifies a blemish on the record.

Recommendations from previous RO/RS are not much use unless they clarify a blemish. We are already looking at what they thought of you at the time. The fitrep is their way of talking to the board. It can be incredibly helpful from somebody involved

with a command during an adverse period if they shed new light on the subject. This could be a member of a company or battalion command group.

There is no "zero defect" mentality. If you have a recent adverse situation, be prepared to be in "probation" for approximately 3 years. If your follow up reports seem to show you gave up or had a bad attitude after an adverse situation you are doing more damage than the adverse material did.

If you have received an adverse combat fitrep you are in a very bad situation. Either find someone to clarify and address mitigating circumstances or get back in combat and shine. This is where the rubber meets the road. If you can't perform in combat then what is the use of having you as a Marine?

Your height and weight have been recorded over several years. It was noticed, and not favorably, when Marines "grew" with their in proportion to their waistline. There were at times 4-inch variations. Also, when suddenly the body fat dropped to 18% after a 2d class PFT but two years earlier the same weight was 21% at 1st class PFT.

Make certain you have a properly fitting tailored uniform for your photo. The images do get looked at but if your gut is hanging out of your charlies and they're too short, that is not looked kindly upon. May not be a show stopper, but it isn't good either.

I sincerely believe there were promotions decided on PFT scores. Especially when it came to the final round in an MOS.

Adverse fitreps can be pulled if proper procedures were not followed. These can include adverse comments with no opportunity for rebuttal or not having a 3rd officer citing. It is not a difficult process. The process is there to help protect the MRO and keep the RS/RO in check.

Avoid having strings of "not observed" There were individuals who literally had years of not observed. One in particular had them from the same RO/RS. He just happened to go TAD at just the right times the RO/RS could get away with "under 90 days". At least get some sort of comments in the report.

RO and RS. If you want your fitreps to carry some weight, here are some items that lend credence to your marks.

Rank your Marines against each other. This was something that was incredibly valuable in the old system of reports.

Give your Marine a "percent" rating of how you view their present standing. For example "top 30% I have served with." "Or middle third." "Top 3 I have ever worked with in my career," but ensure your values and ratings reflect these comments.

The phrase "Recommended for resident PME" is a waste and makes you look bad. If this Marine is recommended then why don't you as the supervisor send them? Obviously you don't mean it that much if you aren't taking action.

Use the spread of A-G. Initially it is tough, but over time the board sees you have a wide spread and where this Marine stands. When the board sees you have a high and low difference of only one point, it doesn't carry as much weight.

RO's, if you do not agree with the marks given to a Marine then mark "Do Not Concur" There were many fitreps marked "concur" yet the RO wrote they would have marked differently.

I have a long laundry list of comments and recommendations for individuals. If anybody would like to get a copy please let me know and I will forward it to you.

Submitted by MGySgt Mattocks

Greetings Combat Camera and Combat Visual Information Center Marines,

As your Enlisted OccFld Specialist I would like to sincerely thank the VI community for your support.

1a. First term Marines, if your End of Active Service (EAS) is between 1 Oct 04 – 1 Oct 05, you are a FY05 re-enlistment option Marine. Re-enlist today. Its very competitive and there are only a few boatspaces remaining. If you are a "Total Concept Marine" and desire re-enlistment ? seek your SNCOs and Officers advice. They are aware of special programs, for example the Quality Re-enlistment Program (QRP) or they can help make recommendations.

1b. Promotion Information: August cutting scores for

Corporal:

4611/NA

4612/1642

4641/1597

4671/1710

Sergeant

4611/NA

4612/1662

4641/1655

4671/NA

Note: SSgt Board is in session until 040924.

2. **USMC Imagery Awards Program** initiatives have begun! Our Imagery Management Unit has disseminated our "**Best of CD**", your command has not received a copy please let us know. The Best of CD submissions are due next month for FY05.

3a. The **Formal School-Call up message** was released 23 July04 and nominations were due 5 Aug 04.

This is a great opportunity to attend advanced Visual Information courses; Digital Multimedia, Intermediate Photography, Reproduction Repair, and Visual Information Management, etc. We have a few seats available for the last DMC class this year! 040906-041025.

3b. **Annual FY04 Occupational Field 46 Advanced VI Program** is approved and congratulations are in order for the following Marines: GySgt Rodriguez from HQMC, Sgt Carrillo from MCRD San Diego, Sgt Gray from MarForPac, Hawaii, and Cpl Murphy from MCB, Quantico, VA. They are at Syracuse University (1) complete school year of Advanced Photography or Advanced Motion Media. Advanced VI Program nominations are due in February each year.

4. **"Know your Job!"** The significance of young Marines cross-training and integrating the CVIC digital multimedia capabilities supports the technological future. Prepare to assume increased responsibility as VI Chiefs, while maintaining your technical expertise. Our Staff Non-Commissioned Officers will require formal schooling to maximize this transition. SSgts should request to attend the Visual Information Managers course and GySgts should attend the Visual Information Officers Course (VIOC). Currently, this course is offered annually after WO1s graduate The Basic School (TBS), at Quantico.

5. **Stay connected!** Stay in contact with your VI Community, be sure to read the VI Flash, monitor the VIM web site, and utilize Marine online. Simply reading the Marine Corps Times can keep you abreast of current events, new policies, and future plans in the Corps. The Marine Corps starts a new year every October 1st, known as a fiscal year (FY). Some MOSs are closed to career enhancing opportunities, however, we participate fully in all career progression programs. Unfortunately, we must have limitations to continue to operate. Based on our size we are authorized (2) B-Billets per MOS, for a total of (8) for our OccFld. To support the mission "Making Marines and Winning Battles" we maintain a rotation of (12) Marines on B-Billets at any given time, 3%. We currently exceed our allocation by (4) and must reduce our applicants to (4) per FY.

Lastly, I want to emphasize, **"Manage Your Careers!"** Plan a year in advance your future geographic location, Special duties, formal school, and Officer Programs. This works best when you seek the guidance from your Officers and Staff Non-Commissioned Officers. Believe it or not, your input is one of the variables considered in your next assignment. However, the Marine Corp's needs will have the final say and once orders are generated, **"Execute!"**

**Submitted by
Cpl T.J. Warren
MCRD PI**

The World of DVD Media

DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, DVD-RAM, Maxell, Apple, Verbatim, Sony, Staples, HP, and on and on, so what is DVD Media, what's the best, and why? If any other units have been looking to the DVD format, it becomes apparent that it's a giant mess. Hopefully this article, along with the references enclosed will be helpful to those interested in authoring DVD video.

Point one. Hollywood vs. Everything else.

Why can I buy a DVD with 2 hours of footage on it at Wal-Mart, but when burning our own movies we're limited to 1 hour of high quality video? Answer, stamping vs. burning. The Movie studios use double layered "stamped" DVD's. The stamp is a physical impression in a thin layer of metal, which is in between some other plastic layers and another metal layer. Advantages of this type of disk are: The impressions are permanent. They aren't going to go away over time. They are cheap to mass produce; once the mold is created it's a simple act of pressing it out over and over again. And so we have our favorite movies on DVD from the movie studios. The down side to this is simple, the studios own the stamping technology and we cannot buy it. Don't expect to have your AVID linked to a DVD stamping device any time in the foreseeable future. Not only are stampers not available to purchase, but may also be considered illegal to own. So we come to "burning" DVD's. Every commercially available drive or deck uses this technology. Burning a DVD is a clever way to forge the real thing. It simulates what stamping does through the use of dyes and plastic. A dye is placed on a disk on top of a thin metal layer and the laser is used to burn out spots or leave them be, thus creating the digital information. That's the basics between stamping and burning. Let's move our attention now to burning DVD's, which is what

we do. On a side note, Dual Layer burning is coming available, but it's new and untested. The other technology on the horizon is Blue-Ray and Blue Laser DVD burning, which is very new and very promising, but only available so far in limited models and not playable in current DVD players. That's all on that.

Point two. DVD+ or DVD-

There are presently two DVD media formats fighting for top spot. The plus and dash camps are still going strong and are still not compatible with each other. You cannot record a - disk in a + recorder, and vice versa. Once finalized, in theory, they should play fine in any player, but this isn't 100% either. DVD-R is slightly more compatible than are DVD+R. In my opinion DVD-R is a better format. But we use what we can.

Point three. DVD Price

Why can we buy one DVD-R for \$0.80 and another for \$4.75? There are some big things to watch out for in this area. DVD media is NOT created equally. The basic rule of thumb is DVD disks made in Japan are good and DVD disks made in Taiwan are not good. That sounds like a no brainer, just avoid DVD's from Taiwan, right? Not so easy. Almost every DVD company out-sources production of their disks to different companies some in Japan, some in Taiwan, some elsewhere. So if you want a Verbatim DVD, you don't have any guarantee where it was made. I'll cut to the chase. The best rated is Maxell. There are other good brands, but in every review Maxell comes in the top 5. They do cost more than a Staples brand DVD, which comes from who knows where. Important thing to note here is "burned" DVD media does not last forever. They can and do degrade over time until they can't be used. This time varies from a few months in the worst cases to well over 200 years in the best cases. This depends mainly on the disk, and somewhat on the recorder. The rule of thumb is, as usual, you get what you pay for. Go ahead and buy a cheap recorder and cheap disks and you'll get some cheap results. The sad part of that is it might not be cheap until 3 years later when no one can use the disks any more and you've moved onto another duty station. My recommendations are the Pioneer PRV-LX1 Deck and Maxell DVD-R disks. The costs ought to be considered an investment for the future, instead of just an expense.

Point four. Web Sites to read and learn more!

<http://www.dvdrhelp.com/>

A very huge and useful site with FAQ's, articles, reviews, ratings and pretty much everything DVD. Navigation within this site is a little confusing and needs some work, but it has a lot of good information and reviews.

<http://www.burningbits.com/>

The CDR and DVD Burning news resource. This site has a lot of good articles on DVD technologies and practices.

3d Marine Division Combat Camera
Exercise Cobra Gold 2004 040505-040601
LCpl. Charles P. Allen

On 5 May 2004, 2 Marines from MCB Camp Butler CVIC, myself and PFC Daniel Klein, were attached to Headquarters Battalion 3d Marine Division in support of Cobra Gold 2004. Cobra Gold is a joint-combined field training exercise between the Royal Thai armed forces and U.S. armed forces. The training takes place throughout Thailand. Cobra Gold began May 12 and ends May 28. We left for Thailand aboard an HSV on 5 May with several hundred Marines, Sailors, and one Soldier. We finally arrived in Thailand 10 May.

Upon arrival in Thailand the Marines from the III Marine Expeditionary Force participated in a very large-scale exercise including the Thai, Singapore, and the Philippine militaries, along with the US Army, Air Force, and Navy. The Marine Forces Headquarters was based at Camp Samaesan, and training was conducted throughout Thailand. Due to transportation, and time limitations, we were not able to cover nearly all the exercises. We did spend a good amount of time with the Combat Assault Battalion (CAB), at Ban Chan Krem, Thailand, and the units near Camp Samaesan.

At my previous duty station, I never once worked with the Public Affairs Office. Typically we are attached to the G-3 or S-3, but as soon as we arrived in Thailand, we were taken under the wing of PAO. That worked out great because of our similar transportation requirements, and similar mission. There are some things that I think would have worked better if we were on our own program, but we never would have gotten where we needed to be without the PAO SNCO, and Officer.

I've been on a couple field exercises, but none to this scale. PFC Klein and I were able to see everything from artillery to recon jungle survival training. Two events really stuck out in my mind. The jungle survival training, and a live fire event with Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Co. CAB Bn.

The Thai Royal Marines know how to survive in the jungle. They taught the US Marines everything from what plants fruits and insects are edible to catching and skinning deadly cobra snakes. I ate things like grasshoppers, small frogs, and cobra. We were also fortunate enough to have shots of cobra blood with our jungle feast (21 and up only of course).

The LAR Co. gave us a great opportunity to gather some great imagery during the live fire. They had the 25 mm guns mounted on their LAVs blasting, mortars providing indirect fire, and finally infantry men flooded out the back of the LAVs and squad rushed the objective. What an amazing feeling running with the scouts with their rifles blazing, and all the live fire going on around you.

It was very impressive to see how well the Marines worked with the local civilians, and military alike. It was also impressive to imagine the logistics that go into such an exercise. The Combat Logistics Battalion-70 had their hands full providing support for

Cobra Gold. It would be impossible to name all the services they provided for the comfort of the participating Marines and Sailors.

Our living quarters were not as bad as to be expected. We stayed in the Thai Royal Marines regular barracks. It was an open squad bay with no a/c and US Military issue cots with mosquito nets set up. Not the most comfortable, but better than sleeping in two-man tents. They had a shower-point set up in a central area for E-5 and below. (SNCO's, officers, and females all had showers in their barracks.) We also had a chow hall that served breakfast and dinner with MREs or rice shacks for lunch.

The MCCS had a small exchange set up, as well as some pool tables, an air-conditioned lounge and a phone center. Local shop owners were allowed to purchase a license to set up tents in what we called the "Baht Lot". They had everything from contraband knives, and bootleg DVDs to nice handcrafted Thai souvenirs. They also had several "rice shacks" set up in the Baht lot where you could eat the authentic Thai food that the locals would sell. The Baht/Dollar conversion is approx 40 baht to the dollar, and that 40 baht could go a long way. You could get a three-piece suit for approximately \$40 US from one of the vendors in the Baht lot.

We typically worked a regular workday, and were allowed to go on liberty almost daily. Most nights we were allowed to, we would go to nearby Pattaya to enjoy the nightlife. We were granted overnight liberty at the very end of our trip to enjoy a tour to Bangkok that a local travel office provided for very cheap. That was the highlight of my trip as far as liberty is concerned. We were able to see a Muay Thai boxing match. We were so close to the ring that the bell was in my way! It was great to see this authentic, small time boxing match. The locals were fenced in the upper deck betting on their favorite boxer, the waiter that brought us our refreshments looked no older than 13, the heaviest match was 135 Lbs. My fellow 4671s would appreciate the aesthetics of the lighting, and small arena.

This deployment was an excellent chance to experience another culture that's not as fortunate as ours, so we can better appreciate what we have. It was also an awesome opportunity to train. Even though the Thai's are not as technologically advanced as we are, they have many things that we can learn from them. I'm sure everyone involved learned many new things. I was consistently amazed at the things I was able to see and do there. What an amazing opportunity.

3d Marine Division Combat Camera
EXERCISE KHAAN QUEST 2004 040518-040608
LCpl Timothy A. Hernandez

On May 18, 2004, I was attached to 9th ESB in support of Khaan Quest 2004. Khaan Quest 2004 was a joint-combined training between the U.S. Marines and the Mongolian Armed Forces. The training takes place at 5 Hills Training Area, near Ulaan Bataar, the capitol city of Mongolia. We embarked for Mongolia via KC-130 on May 18th. There were two waves of Marines that arrived on the 18th, overall 58 Marines and sailors arrived in Mongolia for Khaan Quest 04.

First, we were billeted at the 5 Hills Training Area Compound. We stayed there for one day to participate in the opening ceremony and to get situated before going to the field the next day. The area at the 5 Hills Training Area is extremely spread out. The terrain in Mongolia is very wide-open spaces and very dry. It often took some time to travel from different training sites throughout the training area.

Once we got to the field they would stay there until the 6th of June. While we were in the field we stayed in GP tents provided by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Inside the tents were racks, however the racks were bare with only metal springs to lie on. Inside the deck was just the natural ground and dust plagued the inside of the tent constantly day and night. On many occasions we would wake up for revelry with our sleeping system completely covered in dust, sand, and dirt; as well as any other gear left out uncovered. There were field showers and field chow both provided by the Mongolians.

Some of the training that took place as a part of Khaan Quest 2004 was as follows: shooting range, non-lethal, communications, and convoy operations. Communication and Motor transport Marines were there to support as well as provide instruction and training to the Mongolian Armed Forces. In return the Mongolian Armed Forces provided the Marines with training in their equipment and techniques. Field MP's were there to instruct on non-lethal skill and tactics.

We spent the deployment documenting everything as well as pulling duty and participating in working parties. Many Marines on the deployment were doing more than one job.

We also participated in community relations projects for Habitat for Humanity as well as helping an orphanage in the capital city of Ulaan Bataar. We were then given a few hours of liberty in the capital city for two days.

Overall the mission was a success; both countries were able to accomplish some outstanding training and improve on military relations. Combat Camera was able to get some outstanding video and still imagery. The mission was a success and the Marines returned to Okinawa, Japan on the 8th of June via KC-130.

IMAGERY SUBMISSION REPORT

June

Still:

Beaufort: 34 photographs

2nd MARDIV: 141 photographs

MCRD PI: 24 photographs

Video:

MCRD SD: 6 videotapes

July

Still

JCCC bounce: 1,620

Video

MCRD SAN DIEGO: 19 min

MCAS CHERRY POINT: 162 min

MCB CAMP BUTLER: 37 min

